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The Teaching of Religion

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THIS WEEK

Week by Week 5

After the Self-Criticism
by Daniel J. Callahan 9

Triptych: A Poem
by Samuel J. Hazo 11

A Catholic for President?—III
by John Cogley 12

French Youth in Profile
by Robert Barrat 13

Economic Man on the Land
by Philip Burnham 15

The Teaching of Religion
by Philip Scharper 16

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 22

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 24

Books 27

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

NO GROUND WAR?

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S authoritative stand in the present foreign policy and defense crisis is a source of comfort and reassurance to a great many Americans, apparently. The President has been speaking his mind with vigor and conviction, wielding as he seldom has before the full power of his position as Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief. And those who were anxious over the loss of Secretary Dulles' assured direction of our foreign policy are relieved that Mr. Eisenhower has shown an equally firm and confident manner.

We are not so sure. It may be good news that the President has chosen to exercise for himself the decision-making powers of his office, but the decisions he has made must not be overlooked in jubilation over the fact that he has made them.

In one of his recent press conferences, for instance, Mr. Eisenhower made clear a United States policy decision which had been discernible, perhaps, in previous actions and statements but had never been openly spelled out. Replying to a reporter's question about the need to bolster our armed forces in light of the Berlin situation, the President said, "What would you do with more ground forces in Europe? . . . We are certainly not going to fight a ground war in Europe." He went on to indicate that if our existing ground forces could not handle a "brush-fire situation," the United States would then resort to nuclear weapons.

If these Presidential statements mean anything, it seems to us, they mean that the Administration has committed itself to an enormously important and enormously disturbing decision in foreign policy and in strategic planning. Critics of the Administration, including, on occasion, the editors of this magazine, have frequently expressed misgivings over the ever-increasing reliance, in the balance of power against the Soviets, on "massive retaliation" or "massive deterrence" in the form of nuclear bombs. The "bigger bang for a buck" theory led to steady reductions in defense spending in almost every area but that of the horror weapons and to corresponding reductions in our ability to deal with "limited" emergencies. As our conventional forces declined in numbers and weapons strength, many feared, the United States would be less and less able to stand firm in the face of military threats—except by resorting to the threat of nuclear war. In the past, as Mr. Dulles has admitted, this policy did in fact bring us to the brink of the holocaust, because it left no middle ground between appeasement and the horror of all-out nuclear war.

NOW IT APPEARS that we, and all those who shared our fears, were right—and there is no satisfaction to be found in the thought. President Eisenhower has suggested (and rather offhandedly!) that the NATO forces are now useless, that we would not try to contain a European military action by conventional forces but would use our massive weapons—in a way that could hardly be called deterrence or even retaliation. And this in conjunction with the insistence that our Army and Marine Corps be reduced still further, that we give up any idea of meeting the Soviets weapon-for-weapon or missile-for-missile, that we rely on the ultimate sanction: our ability to annihilate with our bombs untold millions of Russian men, women and children.

The moral implications of such a strategy, which have, astonishingly, been ignored, are profoundly important for a society which claims the ideals we do, and it is incredible that they should be passed over without even a comment. But even on the level of tactics and diplomacy this is a deeply dis-

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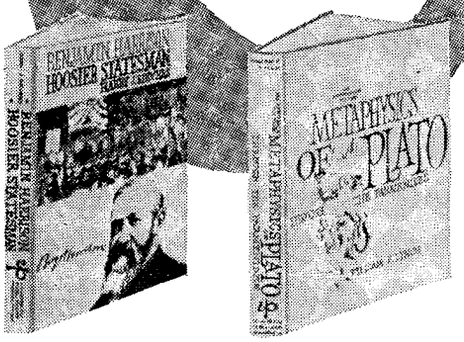

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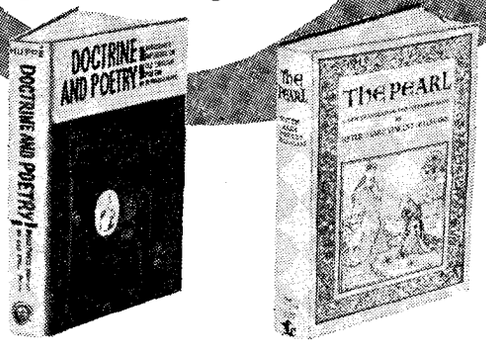

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quieting decision. The abandonment of the effort to maintain the strength of our conventional forces will make it more and more difficult to counter Soviet probes against the West. If we cannot pursue a limited military objective, in any Russian-produced crisis—and we have no reason to expect that there will not be more of them—the West will have less and less room to maneuver between the alternatives of yielding to the Soviets inch by inch and plunging the world into the insanity of nuclear war.

NATO, already weak, has thus been dealt a body blow by the man who was one of its most ardent champions. Our allies, understandably nervous about U.S. intentions by reason of their proximity to Soviet launching pads, are more concerned than ever. The uncommitted nations are alarmed by our acceptance of Soviet military superiority, on the one hand, and on the other by what they see as a frightening readiness on the part of the United States to "brandish the A-bomb" in recent international disputes.

The President's decision to cut back conventional forces and missile development and to rely almost wholly on our possession of the big bombs to deter Communist aggression is, we think, morally disturbing and politically and militarily fraught with danger. The danger of all-out nuclear war is, obviously, perceptibly increased by it. But because such a war would be unspeakably horrible and the responsibility for initiating it almost impossible to assume, the danger of appeasement becomes even more likely. There must be a third alternative.

"COUNTERPOINT"

WE FEEL SURE that many of our long-time readers will remember the work of Philip Burnham which has appeared in these pages over the years. Active as an editor of The Commonweal at various times between 1934 and 1949, when he resigned as executive editor, Mr. Burnham has in recent years differed, often sharply, with the editorial policies of the magazine on many important issues. In the interest of wider discussion of current issues, therefore, The Commonweal will in the future publish a regular column by Mr. Burnham under the general title of "Counterpoint." In it he will present his own point of view on a variety of topics. Mr. Burnham's first column appears on Page 15 of this issue; the second will appear two weeks from now.

EQUAL TIME ON T.V.

IN CHICAGO'S primary elections during the month of February, one of the candidates against incumbent Democratic Mayor Richard J. Daley was a perennial office-seeker named Lar Daly. When television newscasts showed the Mayor greeting the President of Argentina and opening the local March of Dimes campaign, Mr. Daly complained to the Federal Communications Commission, claiming that as a candidate he was entitled to equal T.V. time, in keeping with Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934. In a 4-to-3 decision, the F.C.C. supported candidate Daly's complaint, ruling that the provision of equal time for office-seekers should apply to news broadcasts as well as to obvious campaign broadcasting.

In what was for him an unusual move, Mr. Eisenhower later went out of his way to term the F.C.C. order "ridiculous," making clear, however, that he was referring to the specific case on which the F.C.C. ruled and that no reflection on the Commission's members was intended. The trouble lay with the law under which the F.C.C. decision was made, the President said, and he instructed the Attorney General to seek "remedial legislation."

Queried by reporters, John C. Doerfer, chairman of the F.C.C., suggested that Congress simply repeal the law requiring equal television time for political candidates and see what happens. Such action, he said, would give T.V. and radio the chance to demonstrate self-discipline in political presentations. In any case, the equal time rule should never apply to news broadcasts, said Mr. Doerfer, who himself voted with the minority in the Commission's disputed 4-to-3 ruling.

For our part, we are not at all sure that any legislative change is called for, although there might be no harm in trying for clarification of the law. But we are very dubious about the proposal that legislation requiring equal time be entirely eliminated or substantially modified by Congress. The F.C.C. decision in the Chicago case flew in the face of common sense; distinguishing between the normal activities of an officeholder and his conduct as a candidate does not seem to us as difficult as the majority made it. Indeed, if those in the majority had been intent on discrediting the law they could hardly have done a better job. But one failure in the application of the equal-time rule does not mean the law should be thrown out.

Preserving the principle of equal time for all political candidates is important; even a rule by Congress specifically exempting newscasts from the

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equal-time ruling could lead to dangerous abuses on many local stations, with one-sided political propaganda presented as "news." Despite the pressure that is coming from many sources to secure a change in the basic legislation on the subject, we think a simpler and far more appropriate beginning would be for the Federal Communications Commission to reexamine its own decision on the Chicago case, for which President Eisenhower's "ridiculous" seems not at all too strong.

JOBLESS BENEFITS

WITH UNEMPLOYMENT persisting stubbornly in the vicinity of the five million mark and with genuine distress in such areas as the Southeastern coal mining region, the demand for action has been growing. President Eisenhower himself has convened a meeting of nine state governors on the problem. The House has passed a bill that would extend the duration of present federal-state jobless benefits for another three months; it would affect some four hundred thousand of the present unemployed. A group of eighteen Senators has asked Senator Harry F. Byrd of the Senate Finance Committee for a bill that would extend such benefits for a period of fifteen months. And the opposition to this latter proposal, which would involve federal expenditures of nearly nine hundred millions, is widespread and pronounced.

Meanwhile, other suggestions multiply to meet this unhappy contingency, which is causing extensive social havoc and holds back national recovery. Besides increased jobless coverage, labor leaders tend to favor spreading employment by cutting down the work week to thirty-five hours. David J. McDonald of the United Steelworkers has an attractive vacation plan that would seek a similar effect by providing employees in the industry with a three-months' vacation with pay once every five years. Officials of the Steelworkers estimate that labor-saving efficiencies and mechanical advances have displaced a hundred thousand workers who will never be able to return to their jobs—and at a moment when American steel production is at a record peak. Finally, those favoring remedies primarily of government origin believe that concentration on the nation's various distress areas will prove more effective than general federal spending aimed at creating jobs.

With its support of the House three-months extension plan, which is not even to apply to those who become unemployed after April 1, the Administration seems to favor only the most modest steps to meet the current emergency. Its confidence in the immediate economic future appears undimmed. For the longer prospect, however, the President does call for enlarging the ranks of those protected by temporary unemployment benefits. By making such social security available for those working for non-profit enterprises and for businesses with only one employee, he would add over three million workers to the number now covered by unemployment benefits. Obviously other factors are involved, but the stability of the American economy, and the well-being of millions of families and many local communities, would benefit greatly from substantial emergency measures and long-range extension of our social security coverage.

INDIA DEVELOPMENT

IT MAY WELL be that those who have criticized as inadequate Mr. Eisenhower's programs of loans and gifts to the economically underdeveloped countries have not sufficiently taken Congressional opposition into account. When the predominantly Democratic House Appropriations Committee turned down the recent White House request for the additional funds needed by the Development Loan Fund this year, it showed the vehemence of that opposition.

The method which the Administration has set up to assist in building up the economies of such countries as India has much to commend it. How it works is well illustrated by the agreement on financing river valley development just concluded between Washington and New Delhi. Some two hundred million dollars from the sale of American wheat and other surplus farm commodities to the Indian government is to be loaned back to India to finance fourteen river valley projects that will materially increase food output through irrigation and soil conservation, and also supply hydroelectric power and flood control.

It is the extent more than the kind of American assistance to India and other lands in need of agricultural and industrial development that remains in question. As Prime Minister Nehru recently told Averell Harriman: "A little foreign aid will only keep us where we are. To be really effective, foreign loans from all sources must be sufficient to get our economy off the ground. Now that we have built a sound base, we must make our economy dynamic and self-generating so that further expansion can come from our own resources."

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After the Self-Criticism

Our conception of Catholic education itself is the main issue, and in the end our educational results will only be a reflection of this conception

by DANIEL J. CALLAHAN

ONE OF THE most remarkable things about the lively and fruitful discussion of Catholics and the intellectual life is that after at least four years of incessant articles, books, speeches and symposiums it is still going on. By most odds it was just the kind of issue to be quietly buried in the name of the danger of scandal and the unsettling effect it would have on those who looked to the Catholic college as a bastion of learning and faith. Some, indeed, questioned not only the assumptions and conclusions of those most prominent in the discussion but the wisdom of making a public issue of the affair.

But a public issue it soon became and, while the credit must go to those who raised the question within the academic circle, we shouldn't forget our good luck in having some of our problems reported in the national press. For it is one thing for Catholics to criticize themselves; the unpleasant can be passed off as an interesting if less than serious matter by those so inclined. Yet the same criticism reported in *Time* or *Newsweek* strikes a hard blow at complacency; our community status is at stake then and, to the surprise of few, we are *American* Catholics with one eye always on public relations.

In many ways, however, the public airing of the matter has tended to keep the focus of the discussion on the symptoms of the illness, our lack of Catholic scholars, rather than the causes. If it is this side of the problem which continues to dominate the public print, it is no longer the main concern of those who have, in some way, to overcome the past and shape the future. In fact, as the discussion developed it became evident that nothing less than our conception of Catholic education itself is the main issue and that, in the end, our educational results will only be a reflection of this conception. No less important was a growing awareness that even a healthy goal is, in itself, no guarantee that our practice will mirror this goal.

We now know that a vigorous Catholic intellectual life involves not only a theological and philosophical clarification of ends but also a greater awareness of the psychological and sociological situation of contemporary American Catholicism. Clearly, the philosopher, the theologian and the educator must work closely with the psychologist, the sociologist and the historian, if their vision is to be actually achieved. Two recent books illuminate these complementary tasks. In *American Catholic Dilemma* (Sheed & Ward. $3.), Professor Thomas F. O'Dea brings the insights of sociology and psychology into the discussion. In doing so he treads on our most delicate sensibilities for, as a sociologist, he is quite properly more interested in what we are and what we do than in what we proclaim. His book thus concentrates "upon negative phenomena, upon things which inhibit our development, not upon things which inspire, direct and encourage it. It will therefore leave much unsaid."

WHAT IT LEAVES unsaid is well presented by Father Leo R. Ward, C.S.C., in *New Life in Catholic Schools* (Herder. $3.95.), who states that "this book is written in the conviction that a new Catholic vision is conceivable and is demanded." One is struck in reading these books concurrently that our unconscious no less than our conscious attitudes must be taken into account, that for every good idea we proclaim there is a corresponding psychological deficiency which is capable of undermining the implementation of the idea.

For instance, Father Ward says very persuasively: "Other reasons why Catholic schools have lagged in producing the liveliest zeal for learning and scholar-

Mr. Callahan, who has contributed several articles to The Commonweal, is a member of the faculty at Harvard.

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ship are valid and important. But the 'save the faith and morals' reason is valid, and is decisive. In order to do something about the situation, people must begin to see that a chief reason for the shortcoming is this unlikely one. The highest 'save the soul' motives tend to get in the way of simple, plebeian intellectual ends." We may wonder, after reading Mr. O'Dea's book, whether many people will ever see what Father Ward sees. For what Mr. O'Dea shows is that the intellectual life, so far from always inspiring us, can involve great anguish, and that the intellectual "runs the risk of dissolving, by critical activity, the meaningful basis of his own life." Even should Catholic colleges succeed in making Father Ward's ideal of "Christian learning" the central purpose of a Catholic education, there would be the danger that, at the first sign of error and excess, the inevitable anxiety and risk of intellectual growth would be rejected for the old motives of protection, security and peace.

While we Catholics are quite bold about proposing challenges to be met and theologically optimistic about reconciling what, at a given moment, appear to be contradictory truths, the historical fact is that we scare rather easily when something goes wrong. As much as we deplore a "peace of mind" view of religion, we do prefer order to change; certainty to uncertainty; caution to boldness. In short, we have an infinite capacity for vision and an almost infinite capacity for panic.

As Mr. O'Dea brings out very pointedly, there has always been a tension between critical reason and metaphysical security, between faith and reason. That we have a deep theological assurance that there can be no ultimate conflict doesn't always mean that our instinctive psychological tendencies in response to difficulties will reflect our intellectual convictions. As Mr. O'Dea puts it, "Is it not that conformity and uniformity are sought as a kind of insurance to create and maintain an illusion of universality which hides uncertainty?" So when Father Ward says "We want to develop the sense of learning and respect for learning right up from the kindergarten," one remembers with a shudder our frequently condescending antagonism to those whose "sense of learning" has led them into error.

Actually we know little about the Catholic mentality, much less its American version. Because of this lack of knowledge it is extremely difficult to predict the outcome of the current developments. There have been some remarkable improvements in the past few years: the range and integrity of the discussion itself, the proliferation of honors programs, the increasing number of Catholics in teaching and research, the renewal of interest in encountering non-Catholics, and a greater respect for intellectuals. All of this is a good sign, but what is absolutely unknown is the staying power of the movement should it run into serious difficulties. For once, the vanguard outnumber the custodians of the old order or, at least, they have managed to raise their voices higher.

SIGNIFICANTLY, however, this awakening has been achieved during a period when residual hostility to Catholicism is diminishing; when the Church is in a period of relative freedom from doctrinal controversy; when, in general, there is less reason than at any time in the past for Catholics to be defensive and feel the need for the safety of rigidity and isolation. Yet these helpful conditions can change and change rapidly: an even minor heresy or schism within the Church, a resurgence of anti-Catholicism, or a sudden fear of possible error and excess might be enough to reverse the trend. It is almost, with some notable exceptions, an historical law that Catholics, when challenged by what they consider harmful, over-react and lose for a time what in the long run will prove acceptable and beneficial.

It is just this over-reaction which has cut short so many promising developments in the past. More times than not Catholics have been absolutely right in sharply condemning some current movement; too often, however, they have thrown out the good along with the bad and have later been forced, to their embarrassment, to let the good back in and correct their earlier failure to make necessary distinctions.

Moreover, there has always been a strong tendency among individual Catholics to blur the distinction between the necessary place of dogma, authority and tradition in maintaining the deposit of faith and their less clear place in the shaping of educational practice and goals. In this sense, Catholics are prone to deify for all time what was at some point in the past a pragmatic solution to local problems. We are, as a result, too often late in introducing needed changes. Both the tendency to over-react and the tendency to universalize everything suggest, in most instances, Catholic attitudes rather than Catholic theory. Unfortunately, when there are challenges and dangers to be met, the attitudes can determine the concrete outcome. It so happens now that our conscious aims are favorable to change and experimentation. Inevitably, however, as heirs and victims of our past, our unconscious patterns of response lie in a shallow grave, one easily opened should we fail to anticipate the future troubles that our present evolution is likely to bring.

THE MOST IMPORTANT of these potential troubles, to my mind, is the danger inherent in an unbalanced development of the role of the layman in the intellectual life of the Church. The danger is not that laymen will someday come to dominate the control of Catholic higher education. Instead, it is that the gap between the intellectual layman and the clergy will be

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so great that, in effect, there will be two mutually hostile strata within the Church. Father Ward and Mr. O'Dea both imply that seminary education is falling behind what is available to the layman and that, unless greater stress is put on the liberal arts and science in seminaries, the priest is going to find himself at a definite disadvantage in ministering to the modern world. To this one might add that he will be at an even greater disadvantage in counseling and cooperating with the intellectual layman.

Even now many lay faculty members of Catholic colleges chafe under the weight of having to cope with clerical administrators whose education is not broad enough and whose concept of the university represents what Father Ward characterizes as "save the faith and morals" thinking. There is, we should all admit openly, a substantial amount of incipient anti-clericalism among lay faculty members. Undoubtedly, this conflict has always been present to some degree. What makes the situation different now is that there are an increasing number of opportunities for the lay Catholic outside of Catholic educational circles.

Whereas in the past the Catholic scholar, nurtured in Catholic ghettos and educated in Catholic graduate schools, had little choice but to teach in a Catholic college, it is now becoming possible for him to find a job elsewhere. This is particularly true among those who see the value of doing part or all of their graduate work at a secular college. They realize fully that their secular education is insurance against their being confined to Catholic education; and, as secular colleges become more congenial for the Catholic scholar and teacher, they also know that they won't feel a sense of isolation, a consideration that has led many in the past to choose the Catholic college as the lesser evil.

Judging from my experience at Harvard, I think some Catholic college presidents and deans would be upset to discover that a significant number of their fair-haired graduates, looked upon as those who would revive Catholic college life in the near future, see their Harvard degree as a guarantee that they won't have to go back to those very colleges. Even the majority who do not take this extreme position and would like to return believe that they are in a better position to moderate their own terms; they will stay only as long as they find a congenial atmosphere. And above all, a congenial atmosphere depends upon a good relationship between clergy and laity. Unless priests and nuns develop along with the laity, we may well find, not necessarily nasty battles and disputes, but a simple severance of all professional connection by the layman with Catholic education and his disappearance into the secular academic community. To say this isn't to imply that these same laymen won't be thankful for what they were given or become in any way antagonistic. Nor does it necessarily mean that Catholic colleges won't find enough laymen to fill vacancies. But it could mean that the dedicated and most talented scholars, the ones most needed, will just have nothing to do with them.

IN ONE WAY, of course, whether the Catholic scholar chooses Catholic or secular education, an equal gain for our intellectual life would be possible. It would be tragic, though, if lay scholars repudiated Catholic colleges and chose, as a group, to make their contribution to Catholicism and society elsewhere. One outcome of such a trend would be that part of the emergence of a vigorous Catholic intellectual life would proceed independently of the Church as an educator. One can hardly imagine a state of affairs better suited to bring on, with good reason, a panic and consequent retrenchment in some quarters.

It may seem odd, to those who are still struggling to convince a great number that there is any problem at *all* about American Catholic intellectual life, to stress the difficulties that partial success may bring. Assuming that conditions remain stable, however, there is no reason not to hope and expect that our present enthusiasm and concern will bear good fruit and that even the most recalcitrant will come to share our hopes and excitement. The sobering question, however, is just how possible is it to change attitudes, especially those which we most resist admitting. For it is going to be our ability to resist the residue of our old responses that will, if anything will, carry the day when the renascence of Catholic intellectual life encounters its first real threat. To prepare, while we still have time, to meet such a threat, we need to know better what we want to achieve. Of equal importance, we need also to know ourselves better; to know just what it is that, especially in times of stress, leads us to thwart unknowingly our genuine good and betray our highest ideals.

TRIPTYCH

Left to their dicing on the mobless hill—
their helmets touching in a huddled ring—
the soldiers crouched like cougars flexed to spring.
A culprit spoke behind them and was still.

Hunched in the dust of skulls, the dicers cast
for lots while sky swirled stark and turbulent
with sundown storms above their merriment,
and towers in the lightning cracked like masts.

The women keened and spoke where none could hear.
The men stared sullen as defeated foes.
Routinely from the ring one soldier rose
to mace nailed legs and thrust the final spear.

SAMUEL J. HAZO.

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A CATHOLIC FOR PRESIDENT?—III

HERE IS HOW America's leading Protestant weekly, the *Christian Century*, explains the special concern it feels about a Catholic candidate. American freedom, the *Century* points out, depends on the maintenance of religious pluralism. "Religious pluralism requires that churches limit themselves as honestly and zealously as the state [does]." Jews, Protestants and secularists, the *Century* says, accept pluralism. But though most Catholics would like their Church to practice it, "the hierarchy has steadily refused to accept responsibility for maintaining the secular and pluralistic basis of American life or the separation of church and state in law."

The American hierarchy, individually and collectively, has of course made statement after statement which belies the *Century's* flat charge. The editor who wrote that comment must be familiar with some of these statements, the most solemn of which was a joint pronouncement repeated for the umpteenth time in The Commonweal two weeks ago. I can not believe that he is looking for the Catholic Bishops to repeat still once more that they "deny absolutely and without qualification they are seeking a union of church and state by any endeavors whatsoever, either proximately or remotely."

The key to what the *Century* is actually looking for may be found in a subsequent paragraph of the same editorial. "The crux of the difficulty is found in the doctrine that Catholicism is the one true faith and that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true church, combined with the belief that it is the true church's right and duty to require the state to employ its powers in behalf of 'truth' and in opposition to 'error.' In a pluralistic order, churches holding different convictions concerning ultimate truths have an equal right to exist and to propagate their doctrines. This right the hierarchy does not concede. . . ."

The civil right of all churches to worship and preach freely is of course precisely what the hierarchy has "conceded." No less a personage than Pius XII wrote in 1946: "The increasingly frequent contacts between different religious professions, mingled indiscriminately in the same nation, have caused civil authorities to follow the principles of tolerance and liberty of conscience. In fact there is a political tolerance, a civil tolerance, in regard to adherents of other religious beliefs which, in circumstances such as these, is a moral duty for Catholics." In 1953 the Pope repeated substantially the same thing.

I feel fairly certain that the editor who wrote in the *Century* is familiar with the papal statement, as well as with the statement made by the American Bishops.

What "concession," then, is he looking for? I suspect he is looking for some authoritative Catholic voice to repudiate the "Catholic State" thesis, lock, stock and barrel.

This thesis, which the *Century* only slightly misstated, holds that a state which is overwhelmingly Catholic has a duty to protect the religious faith and integrity of its people by controlling the public promulgation of non-Catholic doctrines and the public exercise of non-Catholic worship.

The thesis certainly has no hold on the Catholic people of the United States. Most of them never heard of it. Those who have, generally regard it as an embarrassing vestige of an earlier, less tolerant notion of the state. But even the hardy antiquarians in Catholic theological circles who regularly come to its defense as an abstract proposition have no illusions about its practicality in the United States.

So the real "crux" of the matter is that no responsible Catholic spokesman, here or abroad, either advocates or contemplates any change in our present Constitutional relationship between Church and State.

Still the *Christian Century* speaks of "concessions." There are three "concessions" it might be seeking. The first it already has—assurance that American Catholics accept and intend to maintain the political principles enunciated in the First Amendment. The second, formal repudiation of the "Catholic State" thesis, will be harder to come by. Some leading Catholics are prepared to grant that with the development of limited government and the self-denying state the thesis has become totally irrelevant. Others, it must be acknowledged, cling ferociously to their abstract devotion to this abstract thesis. But even they admit it is not now, nor is it ever likely to become, applicable in the United States. Third, there is the repudiation of the doctrine which provides the framework of the "Catholic State" thesis—the doctrine that the Catholic Church is the one true church of Christ. This will never be conceded.

I do not really believe that the *Christian Century* editor would ask for this last "concession," for those who value religious liberty would never demand or even seem to be demanding, that Catholic neighbors give up *their* conviction concerning ultimate truth.

So, after looking at the "crux of the difficulty" as the *Century* sees it, I truly wonder what the difficulty is. Still, as long as people believe that a Catholic candidate provides a special problem, a problem remains. I hope that in the months ahead the *Christian Century* will spell out more fully than it has just what worries its readers. The ancient bogies should be exposed to careful examination.

JOHN COGLEY.

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"If God is dead, what will help man to live with misfortune?"

French Youth in Profile

by ROBERT BARRAT

IT IS COMMON enough for newspapers and magazines to publish articles on the younger generation's state of mind: "What youth thinks, what it does, what it wants." When *l'Express* did this in France recently, however, it did not depend on the personal findings of two or three journalists. Instead, it made the project a large-scale operation by turning the poll-taking over to the French Public Opinion Institute. The results were interesting.

Some fifteen thousand young people replied to a series of twenty-four questions, published in mass-circulation papers of diverse political tendencies. The questions that were asked covered the activities, occupations and preoccupations of young men and women, married and unmarried. They ranged from "Are you happy?" to queries about matters of international concern. Some samples: "What is France's Number One problem?" "What do you think is moving the world at present?" "Do you believe there will be another World War in your lifetime?"

The results of this poll have now been published in France in book-form, under the title *The New Wave* by François Giroud, and included in it are one hundred and twenty of the most significant letters. Here for the first time, I believe, we have an over-all impression of what eight million Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of less than thirty years of age are thinking, doing, seeking. One surprising thing about the results is that there are few surprises. Indeed, the similarities to results of comparable inquiries in 1945 and 1938 are striking.

Over ninety per cent of those who answered questions hold that faithfulness is essential for love, and eighty-two per cent believe that this applies to both men and women. This response would seem to destroy the idea, popularized by sensational films and novels, that French youth is addicted to alcoholism and sexual depravity.

In reply to a question about their own future, one-quarter were most concerned about their professional future, twenty-three per cent about their family future. Nearly seventy per cent believe that the best role for woman is that of homemaker. More than half declared they are happier to live in France than anywhere else in the world.

What do these young people of France, who represent the nation of tomorrow, actually think about? The majority are primarily concerned with gaining their livelihood, founding a family, finding an apartment, buying a refrigerator or a small car. Here and there, though, a few young men and women reject this approach to the future. Why, they want to know, does modern life offer so little in the way of adventure? There are no more crusades, they complain, no more mysteries in a Nature tamed by men, no more building of cathedrals.

Such sentiments are exceptional, however. Most of the young people accept the present-day world as it is. And, with all its faults, they prefer it to the world of a century ago. Fifty-three per cent believe they are lucky to be living in this era; eighteen per cent disagree. Why? Those in the majority believe that this is a period of transition during which men are on the verge of achieving substantially better conditions.

The grandparents of most of these French young people still use oil lamps to light their homes in the provinces; they do not have bathrooms; they are oblivious of the theater or of literature. But advances in education and social life have given the new generation access to culture, the chance to travel, and a higher level of material and intellectual existence generally. These young people know, or at least sense confusedly, that the future is filled with promise in such matters as housing, working conditions, individual and family well-being. The present is difficult, but the future will be better. The children one now brings into the world, they believe, will live under conditions less harsh than those endured by their parents—barring an atomic war, of course.

JUDGING BY the results of this poll, the romantic hero may be on the way out. Traditionally, this figure was overwhelmed by love, grief-stricken because he was misunderstood by society, torn by metaphysical or emotional despair. In literature, the romantic hero often was and is very appealing. In reality, though,

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romanticism is most frequently the result of social inadaptability. The impoverished students of the nineteenth century realized that they had little chance of marrying the daughters of the bourgeoisie, or of what was left of the French nobility, or of making a place for themselves in the sun. That is why they languished at the edge of some lake and tore up paving blocks to make barricades.

The young Frenchmen of 1959 labor under no such anxieties. They study mathematics and physical science, confident that tomorrow's world will belong to the technicians. The great majority of them, even those who are devotees of literature, have positivist and realist tendencies. They have grown up in the midst of so much drama and social and political upheaval that only a minority (forty-one per cent) declare that there are still things for which they would be ready to risk their lives. The others either are uncertain (seventeen per cent) or give a negative answer.

Except for a minority of Christians and Leftists, very few of those questioned consider that any human cause deserves devotion of body and soul. To defend one's family if it is threatened, or to fight for one's personal freedom against a totalitarian system—yes, these things are worth dying for. As for a positive ideal, though, no.

As one young man wrote: "It bothers me always to hear people speaking of ideals. An ideal never exists actually. I do not think people who say that it can are ever sincere. Barrès had an ideal of patriotism, but he was never at the front." Another said: "To risk my life? We have been exorcised of all the demons of the dawn by brutal kicks in the pants. We will not be a generation of martyrs. . . . I would not be willing to risk a hair of my head for such things as my country or the Republic in all its forms. I know what they are worth."

NONETHELESS, no one can live without values, especially if he is young. Perhaps the new generation realizes that ideals are necessary, but it no longer knows what to adhere to. The poll did not have any questions on religion, and that was one of its serious omissions. But it was evident in going through most of the responses that we are dealing here with a youth without God, or without gods.

"If God is dead, and if no temporal faith succeeds in replacing Him, what will help man to live when he happens to fall into misfortune?" wrote one who replied. "The thing that young Frenchmen lack is to be caught up in some great collective adventure."

All of them describe, with feeling and precision, exactly what appears to them unjust in present-day society; social inequality, an unfair division of wealth and income, the condition of the workers, the sufferings of the old and the sick, the difficulties confronting French youth. But only four per cent believe that they themselves can have any influence on the destinies of France; twenty-five per cent hold strongly that they can *not* have. Thirty-five per cent believe themselves to be entirely at the mercy of whatever happens. They see bankers, oil companies, and politicians as the ones responsible for the policies they believe to be bad for France.

On what, then, does their belief in a better future rest? It seems to depend only on a vague, never-formulated confidence in technical progress. Despite the bad will, and egoism and greed of those in power, the reasoning goes, such progress will in some mechanical fashion improve the lot of a good many.

CERTAIN CONCLUSIONS from this survey seem quite clear. If these young people have a greater air of assurance and think about at least certain things with greater lucidity, they nonetheless suffer from a new *mal de siècle,* even though it is one which is more hidden or about which they are more reticent than were their parents or grandparents. They need to love something, to be able to dedicate themselves to a cause that will take them out of themselves. Otherwise they will never escape emptiness when they do manage to get the refrigerator, the washing machine and the car of their dreams. That explains, I think, why some of them want to live in Israel, in Tunisia, or even—despite their mistrust of the Communists—in Soviet Russia, for in all those countries young people have tasks to perform.

Christians, who know that only the encounter with God can ultimately satisfy the void in man's heart, cannot help but feel anxiety when confronted by such rootlessness and disillusionment. In analyzing the result of this poll, philosopher Henri Lefebvre asked whether a more profound inquiry would not "disclose a great absence, a vast ethical void, a conscience terrifyingly private and abandoned to itself." I fear he is correct.

Even the political effects of all this are far from reassuring. As is by now well known, totalitarian regimes do succeed after their own fashion in filling the "ethical void" in young consciences. If by misfortune France should embark on a political adventure of this nature, will our youth, for all their proud "clear thinking," be able to resist the evil demons?

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ECONOMIC MAN ON THE LAND

IN THE CONGRESSIONAL hearings about agriculture and in the papers and magazines which delight in advising Congress, there is an unusual diffidence about being the first to submit specific suggestions for needed legislation on this subject. "After you, Mr. Secretary!" "After you, Mr. Senator!"

The urgency of the farm problem this spring doesn't come from rural depression; and the trouble, most evidently, can't be solved by subsidies. Also, there is no great pressure for quick solution of the more flagrant of agriculture's particular problems of welfare and justice, such as bad wages, and the wandering, alien *braceros*. The urgent, the most difficult farm problem of the year, if not the era, is the relation of agriculture to the rest of the whole economy. We don't know what is possible and we are not clear about what we want. There is a sweeping national drive for productivist efficiency, but at the same time the country generally holds to the ideal of the free and self-reliant farmer patriot.

The productivist standard applied to agriculture would demand the maximum output of material wealth per unit of land, labor and capital. The efficient elevation of the Gross National Product is the thing. At the current stage, such an approach would require that enormous quantities of American land be taken out of farming. Building up the Conservation Reserve since 1956, the Government has already "rented" from farmers more than twenty-three million acres. It is expected that slightly over thirteen million additional acres will go into reserve during 1959. In fact, this huge diversionary operation has not reduced the harvest because the rest of the land has been made so fruitful. The next step would be to hire and buy whole farms out of production, and to loosen the harsh winds of a free market to blow still more farmers and farms clear out of business. The rest would be whipped up to a level of scientific efficiency exactly competitive with the automobile, chemical, electronic and all other industries which seek money, men and markets.

But there is a conflict and hesitation because we haven't all settled with full psychological comfort upon the national-productivist ideal. The Gross National Product doesn't seem necessarily to evaluate a way of life nor the character of a citizen. In history, cultures are renowned more for the brilliance of their economic waste than for their production-distribution aptitude. Saint Paul isn't remembered for the improvements he made in the tent industry. Tents were doubtless manufactured quicker and cheaper in the factories of Antioch. Rembrandt added very little to the productive capacity and smooth distribution of goods and services in 17th Century Holland. It was not Rembrandt who made the people he painted so fat. At home, in 18th Century Massachusetts, the Minute Men didn't gather at Lexington from automated assembly lines.

The eighty-five or ninety per cent of Americans who aren't farmers could do terrific injury by forgetting these more personal considerations and trying to force upon agriculture the stark economy of a well engineered wealth machine. Men ought to have access to the land not only for a profitable bit of business, but also for a farm career and a farm life, with their commercial efforts aimed not at the maximum sales and cash income, but at the maintenance of their farm career and home and life. The farmer patriot should not be driven off the land by the economic man.

There is still a certain freedom of action, since it is still possible to find in the United States, scattered around the country off the black-topped highways and behind the Burma Shave poetry, almost every type of farm and farming which history has brought forth, from primitive self-subsistence to the most technological, superindustrial. It is a definite irony that the particular variety of farm which recently brought down the wrath of Washington and all the metropolitan Press was the large scale, corporate operation. Whatever righteous indignation there was about the price support payments was soon lost in the general castigation of "corporate farms," and "big business" on the land. We should really beware of the double standard: accepting in other industries the economic drives we condemn in agriculture. In the city, they call it "the system," or the "rat race," or, simply, "a living," in which we nearly all get caught, with less and less kicking. At the same time the compensating urge develops to keep farms, like the Wilderness Areas, as places we may never get to ourselves, but which we love to have exist somewhere, where we feel they are living a freer, less commercial, more rugged way of life.

But farms can't be kept a trackless wild area cut off from urban intrusion. Farmers can't be preserved by city anthropologists as the Hopi have been, living their weird life alone up on the desert mesas. To maintain a measure of mental and social balance, we must keep those psychological drives conscious, and think how farming can avoid repellent productivism while continuing to be alive and creative, and especially creative of self-reliant farmer patriots. It is splendid if the city will help such ideals to flourish on the land, but probably the only practical way for the city to help in the long run is by modifying its own standard of business rationality, and by escaping that death urge toward a perfectly integrated, perfectly bleak, material utopia.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

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The 'new way' is really the recovery of a very ancient way

The Teaching of Religion

by PHILIP SCHARPER

CONTEMPORARY Catholic educators seem to exhibit not only a capacity but an enthusiasm for merciless self-scrutiny, and at their meetings Catholic deans and dons now belabor Catholic education with that unfettered glee formerly reserved for Catholic attacks on Horace Mann, John Dewey and "progressive education." Underlying such a change are at least two important intuitions: one, that honest criticism is a sign, not of disaffection, but of love; and, second, that the education process, almost by definition, calls for constant re-examination and revision.

If continual re-evaluation is a fact of educational life even where the student is mastering logic or literature, how much more provisional, how much more impatient for examination must be religious education —the most complex educational process conceivable. It is in this context that one welcomes a recent volume, *Shaping the Christian Message.* (Macmillan. $5.50.) Under the editorship of Father Gerard S. Sloyan, twelve authoritative writers besides himself offer a candid examination of Catholic religious education as it is to be observed in past history and present hopes.

To date, I would feel, it is the most important single contribution to the theory of Catholic religious education yet to appear in English. The volume does not quite fulfill the publisher's claim: it is not "necessary reading for educators, parents and members of the clergy of every faith." Many educators, most parents and not a few members of the clergy would be bored by the four historical essays, baffled by the four "theo-

Mr. Scharper, formerly one of the editors of The Commonweal, is now with Sheed & Ward.

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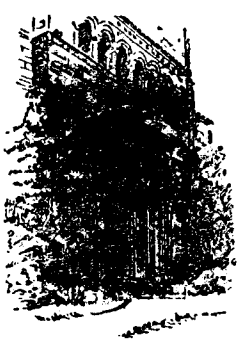

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logical and scientific" essays and bemused by the four "practical" essays. The volume does, however, fulfill the editor's obvious purpose: to put into the hands of specialists—the strategy-makers and the teachers of teachers—a technical volume which would discuss the main areas and problems of modern Catholic religious instruction from the perspectives of historical practice, psychological patterns and present opportunities.

To cite some contributors—Gustave Weigel, S.J., Johannes Hofinger, S.J., Josef A. Jungmann, S.J., Father J. J. Maguire and Father Sloyan himself—is to attest the merit of the book. Still, excellent as it is, it will surely be followed by a companion volume, drawing perhaps on the teaching experience and expectations of teaching sisters and lay people, who, in America, carry on most of the catechetical apostolate but who are not represented among the contributors to this volume. And such a volume should also register the reactions of religious educators to the critiques of curricula and method made by disgruntled products of Catholic religious education.

THESE CRITIQUES prove the wisdom of trying to shape the Christian message in a new way. The "new way" which is emphasized in each chapter of this present book is, of course, actually the recovery of a very ancient way. It consists in attempting to have religious education do for each student what was done for each of those whom Christ in His life on earth invited to participate in the fullness of life.

Religious education, in other words, can not feel that its primary purpose is to enable the student to "defend his faith" against all objections. The purpose of religious education is to make the student live his faith, to make him aware that the Christian faith is an encounter with Christ, and the surrender which this encounter demands is made less difficult by the questionings of a skeptical world than it is by the rebellion of the self against the invasion of a loving but demanding God.

Religious education, then, must be a preparation of the student for those moments when he will hear the invitation of Christ. For every student there will be a journey to Damascus, the call to come down from the sycamore tree, the invitation to come and see where the Master dwells. It is this realization which has made those engaged in religious education increasingly aware of how limited and ultimately self-defeating was the former reliance on an almost exclusively apologetic approach. For the apologist is almost inescapably at the mercy of the one with whom he is engaged in debate. The apologist is always framing his religious beliefs into an answer to a question; his presentation of the faith often tends as a result to be governed by strategic considerations, and his very living of it may be merely the espousal of a creed. The primary object of the

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Christian Faith is not a body of doctrines; it is not a something but a Someone. It was a Person Whom Paul encountered near Damascus, Who called Zacheus down from the tree, Who summoned Nathaniel.

It is not by accident, then, that the current re-evaluation of religious education should stress the Scriptures as the authentic record of God's invasions of history and the repository of the good news which Christ brought. The Scriptures are beginning to be taught as the manual of sanctity and not, as they were so often taught before, as an arsenal of "proofs" or moral maxims.

For this reason, too, religious education is paying increasingly serious attention to the liturgy, wherein the student becomes aware that he is a member of the Church praying, that he is not an isolated figure striving to establish contact with God, but he is a member of the Mystical Body praying to God with and through Christ. To read the Scriptures thus and to live in the liturgy thus is to open oneself to the influence of Christ, to invite that forming of Christ Himself within the baptized which is the very goal of Christian education. It is, in short, the purpose of Catholic religious education, on whatever level, to turn out human beings who will embody the Christian style of life.

IT IS HAZARDOUS, of course, to speak of a Christian style of life because one is always prone to think of it as a uniform mode of action and reaction. It is necessary to remind oneself constantly that this style of life is capable of an indefinite number of different embodiments, as the rich diversity of the saints attests. But the fact that it is hard to define, like love or poetry, does not make it less real. It is what happens to a person when he tries habitually to think the Christ-like thought, speak the Christ-like word, do the Christ-like act.

(The complaint voiced to me most often by my former students is that their Catholic education did not recommend such a style of life. The divinity of Christ was proven, His role as Redeemer was studied, His establishment of the Church made plain. But little attention was paid to Christ as the Model and Meaning of life for the Christian, who if he is not, in effort at least, another Christ, is nothing. He can bring to the world nothing more important than his effort to "show forth" Christ.)

This may sound naive or purely pietistic in view of the complex problems which beset the modern world. But can we not say that an element in the complexity is the fact that Christians have so often approached these problems in a manner almost indistinguishable from that of the non-Christian, that the Christian has so often adopted a non-Christian style of life? Would we, for example, have come into the twentieth century without even an inchoate theology of work (without,

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indeed, even the phrase) if the Christian consciousness had kept vivid the image of Christ the worker, making useful things for His neighbors at Nazareth because He loved them?

Would a theology of work have lagged so far behind the psychology and sociology of work if Christian meditation on the new Adam at Nazareth had led to an intuition that man is a collaborator in creation, that "man the maker" is, by his work, fulfilling his nature, not living out the curse laid upon the old Adam?

Would the religio-political conflicts between American Catholics and their non-Catholic neighbors be quite so bitter and unblessed if (to look at no conscience other than our own) we Catholics did not so often approach these conflicts in a non-Christian style? I know that such issues as Christmas observance in public schools and direct Federal aid to Catholic schools are complex political and social problems. Our rights as citizens are involved, I know, but so too, perhaps, are the Beatitudes, and Christ's injunction to walk a second mile with him who forces you to walk one, and the example of Christ before Pilate.

And would we Catholics tend to betray quite as much nervousness as we do in the face of the perils which threaten us if we confronted them in more of a Christian style? Communism, nuclear war, the rising tide of nationalism in Asia and Africa—these hold the threat of cosmic evils. But if a Camus or a Pasternak, in the face of crisis and chaos, finds a radical joy in the mere fact of being human, should not the Christian be able to find a deeper joy in the fact of being a Christian. It is not only that for the Christian, as Christopher Dawson has observed, every catastrophe is a rehearsal for the real thing. It is paramountly because Christ has triumphed over sin and death, and we share in that triumph. This fact does not represent a means of escape nor an evasion of our human responsibilities. We must labor to make the earth a fitting homeland for humanity, even while we realize that we have not here a lasting city. The Christian style of life permits the wry smile of irony and paradox; it precludes only the nervous frown and nail-biting.

If there is to be a future, there will be in it, I suspect, fewer nail-biting, neighbor-baiting American Catholics. *Shaping the Christian Message* is a pledge of that, together with such recent developments as the Sister Formation Movement, the Society of Teachers of Sacred Doctrine in Catholic Colleges, and the more positive mandates now being given to the Newman Clubs.

This does not mean, of course, that the coming generations of American Catholics will be easier to live with. They will, I fear, be more difficult, because part of the Christian style of life is to question the world's complacencies and to shatter its securities, even while the Christian tries to heal its wounds.

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THE SCREEN

ALL THE SAD YOUNG MEN ARE ANGRY

IT SEEMS that all countries have their angry young men. But England has most; where they have already made quite an impression on the stage, they are also seeping into the films. The most remarkable thing about the English "Room at the Top," which script-writer Neil Patterson adapted so skillfully from the novel by John Braine, is that it is so good as a movie. It is bitter, frank, honest, distasteful; but it is more than a story about a resentful young man who is determined to reach the top no matter whom he hurts on the way up. Its characters ring true, and while none of them win sympathy, they do win interest even though the lengthy film is repetitious and too often wallows in sordid details.

No doubt much of the picture's success is due to the good production given it by John and James Woolf, the fine photography and sets showing the northern English town of Warnley, and Jack Clayton's excellent direction of a first-rate cast. The role of handsome, cynical, twenty-five-year-old Joe Lampton is made to order for Laurence Harvey, who plays it to perfection. Joe, ambitious to hit the top, hating his low background and the insinuating slurs of the self-assured boys with the "big mouths and the silver spoons stuffed in them," coldly plans his campaign. He gets along well enough with the middle-class workers (Donald Houston, Raymond Huntley) at the Town Hall, but it is the moneyed upper classes who snub and nettle Joe —except for the attractive daughter (Heather Sears) of the very wealthy leading industrialist. Joe knows he can win her if he plays his cards right. But this takes time and, while waiting for this girl to fall into his trap and be won by his charms, Joe dallies with Alice, an older, married woman (superbly played by Simone Signoret) who comes closer than anyone else in the good cast to gaining audience sympathy. Joe and Alice don't mean really to fall in love; but their passionate affair and the intense quarrels in which they reveal their true selves get out of hand. By the time Joe has trapped the rich girl, he realizes it is Alice he really cares for.

"Room at the Top" takes an awfully long time to come to its bitter conclusion, and I'm not sure that Joe Lampton is worth all this attention. Only in his remorse after Alice's suicide does Joe attain a kind of stature and dignity. At the end, the trapper is trapped. Perhaps Joe, with all his whining and false standards, is not worse than most of the people around him; and the picture is particularly effective, with the help of a supporting cast that includes Hermione Baddeley and Donald Wolfit, in portraying the various classes of

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society in an industrial town like Warnley. We have come a long way, it seems, since the heroes of Horatio Alger.

IT IS NOT particularly surprising that the Polish Government looks with disfavor on "The Eighth Day of the Week," a film that was made in Warsaw in both Polish and German language versions and was adapted from the novel by Poland's angry young man, Marek Hlasko. No doubt the Poles have a point in claiming that the picture gives a decidedly unfavorable picture of their young people and their morals—but at the same time it could very well be a true picture of the immorality that grows out of post-war despair. The angry young men and beatniks of other nations don't describe a particularly healthy climate. In any case, the Polish Government has raised a hub-bub over the film and has refused to export the Polish-language version.

A depressing picture it certainly is with its story of two Warsaw students who, in love and longing to get married, can't find a place to live. Directed by Alexander Ford, who wrote the screenplay with the novel's author, "The Eighth Day of the Week" is remarkably frank in showing the rubble and decay that still exists in present-day Warsaw, an exterior decay that matches the inner decadence. The young couple start out well enough with scruples against illicit love. The girl, played with great dignity and beauty by Sonja Zeimann, holds off her anxious young man (Zbigniew Cybulski), but circumstances are against her at home where a cynical boarder, a sick and whining mother, a resigned father and a drunken, embittered, war-hero brother practically push her out into the streets. And the streets with their ruins, amoral people and pleasure-seeking young folk living only for the moment offer no solace. Failing to find an apartment, the discouraged young couple try to settle for a few hours of love, but they cannot even find a room; and when they are separated after a series of frustrating events, the girl is seduced by an older man who gets her drunk and takes her home.

Obviously "The Eighth Day of the Week" is a pretty grim affair. Director Alexander Ford and author Marek Hlasko would have been wise to lighten their picture more often in the manner of the amusing scene in the department store. As the film stands with its continued note of a dripping faucet of despair, it becomes rather monotonous and sets itself up for easy satire. Even the film's finale, after the eventful night of separation and the girl's running to the boy's newfound apartment, is only a compromise. But perhaps that is the best Hlaska can do; after all, he is an angry young man and has a right to be in a world he never made, a world in which pure love has no opportunity to stay pure.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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THE STAGE

MANNERS BORN AND BRED

A WANT OF discrimination between style and manner, I should say, has denied "Look After Lulu" *(at the Henry Miller)* that charm its prodigality of talent—the Messrs. Coward, Beaton and Ritchard—seemed so confidently to assure. Nothing, of course, weathers the international sea change so hazardously as comedy, and should one wish to certify the fact, he need merely recollect French resistance to "Visit to a Small Planet," as well as our own mute incomprehension before the British jollities of something like "Seagulls over Sorrento." And yet, in such responses there is neither national malice nor congenital torpor of wit: only the honest recognition of a vacuum. For what comedy cannot carry into alien skies is that "hum and buzz of implication" Mr. Lionel Trilling sees as the evanescent context in which a society makes all its explicit statements of value—the absence of which, indeed, is part of the melancholy of the past.

In the matter of Georges Feydeau—whose farce of Paris in *la belle époque, "Occupe-toi d'Amélie,"* is the root of "Look After Lulu"—this "stilled voice of multifarious intention and activity" moves one less to sadness than to esthetic confusion. For we have not, we Anglo-Saxons, that easy habitude of mind or manners or nature within which such images as are the Feydeau stock-in-trade—mild salacities of *cocottes* and champagne suppers, of tumbled beds and lingerie —might seem a valid human comment. With us, ethics and romance supervene, where the French preoccupations must rather be seen as the emotional self-criticism—indeed revenge—of a temperament at once profoundly moral and passionate: the race which produced, and loves Feydeau, also produced and loves Racine. Nor have we the sophistication or spontaneity of imagination to accept Latin farce on the intellectual terms of its existence: as a systematic inversion of tragedy, a monstrous infernal machine dedicated to the ludicrous annihilation of its victims.

In the teeth of such cultural complexity, the approach usually elected in bringing French farce to the Anglo-American stage is that androgynous tone referred to in contemporary manners as "the higher camp." Its method is an elaborate exaggeration, and its intent

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a mockery, without emotional content or human point. It *is*, moreover, a manner, and not a style—which would imply some significant relation between the work's inner quality, or thought, and its outward or visual expression. Style would have seen this Feydeau world as tangible and fleshy, and its moral as the joke of mind on the appetites; in "Look After Lulu," vice loses not only half its grossness but all its allure. Mr. Cecil Beaton's dresses are without charm, for example —however "witty"—because they are done without desire, without that sensuous stir and innocence which are a part of all beauty. Mr. Cyril Ritchard's direction seems so exhausting because it is without humility and permits to the play no dignity of its own assumption, no legitimate world of value, however trivial. Even the artful Miss Tammy Grimes—whose special quality makes a delightful place to visit, though I think I should not be able to live there—emerges not as Feydeau's *cocotte,* all pliant vacancy, but as a dotty baggage mad with her own singularity.

All of which is not to deny "Look After Lulu" considerable diversion and its certain *folie de plaisir,* plus that chic which makes for tinkle-talk at twilight. One observes only how it might have gone directly to the guts and the mind's gaiety, instead of laboriously erecting a facade with so little relation to nature, history, taste or wit.

ACROSS THE CHANNEL to Farquhar's "The Beaux Stratagem" which made—with its easy draught of Irish zest, its nimbleness and rustic vigor softening the Restoration glaze—a capital entertainment at the Phoenix, shadowed only by sudden withdrawal after a scant two weeks. Yet if the occasion seems to call for an obituary, myself—and supported by the enthusiasm of a full and non-academic audience at the last two performances—I would rather insist on it as a vital experience of the season. The play itself was a happy choice, for Farquhar imposes neither Congreve's aristocratic exactions nor Wycherly's cruel problems of tone and decorum: he is, as Mr. Louis Kronenberger has it, more a man of the world and less a man about town. Within his loose ironies of reason and sentiment—this variety of impulse, often meretricious, which draws at will on the bucolic, the romantic the artificial and the spurious—we may be at bourgeoi ease: anything goes. There is enough starch of elegance to give "The Beaux Stratagem" profile—splendidly marked by Mr. David King-Wood; enough sly common sense to charm—Miss June Havoc's burden, and carried with delicious femininity; and rather an excess of village sportiveness. Mr. Stuart Vaughan's natural tact kept the three demands in admirable poise and discovered, wherever possible, brilliance: if anything must be faulted, it is the license he permitted to those

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players who represent lower-class buffoons. To be sure, no viable image of peasant manners remains in our tradition—if ever it existed—but athletic excess as a substitute for imagination can hardly be the answer.

Whatever the fate of this production and its predecessors—"The Family Reunion" and "The Power and the Glory"—the determined sponsors of the Phoenix, Mr. Houghton and Mr. Hambleton; the director; the stars who have taken financial disadvantage to appear on Second Avenue, and the players who are laboring to form the nucleus of a permanent ensemble: all may take pride in the knowledge that their venture this season stands as the most considerable advance to wholeness and maturity the New York theater has made in a long time. After four years of schizophrenia, the Phoenix has finally arrived at what is most rare in culture or in life: an identity. It has also become, with Circle in the Square, the only constant theatrical enterprise which one may attend with the certainty of pleasure. How much sacrifice, grit, vision and despair have gone into this achievement, no one sensible of the anarchy of our theater will doubt. But the rewards, though quiet, are firm. Mr. Vaughan, by his authority within divers styles, has shown himself a most expressive talent. Miss June Havoc, who might be baring her molars for the indifferent delectation of videoland —and hauling in the loot—has chosen rather the artist's way of responsibility, and with it, not incidentally, has secured to herself that intelligent affection we reserve for those who have genuinely pleased us. Miss Sylvia Short and Mr. Eric Berry, among others, might have knocked about for years as theatrical fugitives; the notable persuasion they brought to various roles this season marked them as definite personages.

One might wish finally that the great Foundations would turn a discerning eye to this admirable venture of the Phoenix Theater, and its present high estate. It is well and generous of The Ford Foundation to donate, as it did recently to each of a group of selected directors, ten thousand dollars with which to experiment and engage in self-development. But what will this avail them if they have, in later maturity, no New York house in which to display their developed selves? Theater, it cannot be too often remarked, is a collective art, and not a solitary enterprise, such as painting or the writing of poetry. The Phoenix has shown itself one point of security for those new energies which The Ford Foundation would wish to cultivate, and if it is to arrive at its logical destination of repertory—at the *physical* equivalent of that intellectual identity it now commands—it must have the imaginative financial assistance of those bodies which, for better or for worse, have it within their power to control the economics of our culture.

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The Third Chapter in a Modern Literary Experiment

MOUNTOLIVE. By Lawrence Durrell. Dutton. $3.95.

By ROBERT GUTWILLIG

TO ONE who felt that *Justine* and, to a lesser extent, *Balthazar* were wonderful and indeed significant novels, *Mountolive,* Lawrence Durrell's third part of a projected tetrology, is necessarily somewhat disappointing. Unlike the others, it does not seem to me an entirely integrated novel, being oddly disunified in thought, feeling and construction. However, it demands far less of the reader than its predecessors, and is certainly better suited to be read alone or out of sequence than *Balthazar.* No, my real quarrel with *Mountolive* is that it does not fulfill the promises or motivations, or what one took (perhaps mistakenly) to be the promises and motivations of the first two books, but rather throws everything into question and doubt.

The narrative (chronological except for a few flashbacks) deals with the English diplomat, David Mountolive, who comes to Egypt as a young man, falls in love with the country and with Leila Hosnani, the mother of Nessim and Narouz. All this we already know, but it is both pleasant and powerful to see it directly. Mountolive is then posted abroad and does not return to Egypt for twenty years or so. When he finally returns he does so as the British ambassador and is immediately involved in a weird political and religious plot that includes Leila, Nessim, Narouz and Justine among others.

The book's first seven chapters, dealing with Mountolive's introduction to Egypt, his diplomatic exile in the capitals of the world, his correspondence with Leila, his meeting with the English novelist, Pursewarden, and his blind sister, and the first days of his return to Egypt—all this I found absolutely marvelous. As I and many others have remarked before, Mr. Durrell is a writer remarkable, perhaps unique, in his ability to be simultaneously evocative and precise. I know of no other contemporary novelist who can call up a place or mood with his clarity, redolence and force.

The Hosnani family are Copts, that small Christian minority in a Moslem country who, after Egyptian self-government, apparently found their precarious position of wealth and power in jeopardy. The Hosnanis are also convinced that the intelligentsia of Egypt is primarily Coptic, and fortified by these convictions and/or prejudices they involve themselves in an elaborate, if pathetic, plot to take their place in the hot Egyptian sun. Nessim,

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curiously enough, decides that the best way for the Copts to emerge as a force in Egypt is to arm the Jews in Palestine. It is against this background of Coptic and Jewish conspiracy that Justine's marriage to Nessim and her love affairs with Darley (the narrator of *Justine*) and Pursewarden are revisited and re-interpreted.

I found these re-evaluations neither as compelling nor as convincing as they were meant to be. To learn that Nessim was able to court Justine successfully only after he had enlisted her in his conspiracy is flatly disappointing. To discover that Justine entered into her affair with Darley solely for the purpose of keeping an eye on his mistress, Melissa, and that her relationship with Pursewarden was similarly grounded is all ultimately unsatisfying. Somehow one does not want to know about these motives; they seem unworthy. And yet such is the cumulative force of the three books that the reader is ultimately convinced that for these characters in their time (the nineteen thirties) the romantic and the political are very much entwined.

I think it is unfortunate that the book slides away from Mountolive, though it ends with a grotesquely vivid and peculiarly moving scene of Narouz's murder and mourning—a scene, I'm afraid, whose total effect, like several others; is partially dissipated without a reading of one or both of the previous novels. Mountolive is an interesting character; one would have liked to have seen more of him, not being divested of his clothes and his composure by a pack of child prostitutes (an oddly decadent scene recalling *Justine*, but out of place here), but as we last see him alone and defeated, staring into the sad eyes of a dachshund. Pursewarden is perhaps the best character in the book, literally full of life, and the explanation of his already-known suicide is for me Durrell's largest mistake and a clue to the others. I just don't believe it.

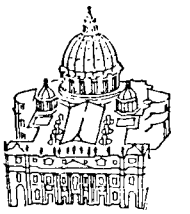
But after all these quibbles and qualifications, and in the end that is all they are, *Mountolive* is quite a book—a book, like *Justine* and *Balthazar*, that can be returned to with pleasure and reward, a book that makes one extraordinarily eager to read *Clea*, the last installment in this series by a writer who may yet turn out to be the most intriguing fictional experimentalist since Joyce and Proust. Incidentally, *Mountolive* is the April selection of the Book of the Month Club—a choice in every way curious.

Modern Sculptor

IVAN MESTROVIC, SCULPTOR AND PATRIOT. By Laurence Schmeckebier. Syracuse University Press. $10.

By BETTY KAUFMAN

THE BIOGRAPHICAL sketch which forms the main text of this book reveals that Mestrovic is an artist whose ideas about the world are as important as his sculpture: in fact, his sculpture is on the whole didactic or dramatic. Not unnaturally, the result of this



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turns out to be that the most admirable trait of his art is the new energy and the fresh expressiveness he put into two areas of sculpture that had long suffered from academic platitudes and lack of vitality: public monuments and religious art. The strength of his convictions—humanist, national, and religious—informs all of his work and seems to override in importance the aesthetic motives and in some cases what might be considered the over-expressive or melodramatic forms of his art. This Croatian-born Yugoslav patriot and Catholic achieved "a rediscovery of the primary appeal of art," as his biographer notes in a quotation from an article by James Bone *(Manchester Guardian,* 1911).

Mr. Schmeckebier puts his account in a style, perhaps subdued by respect for his subject, that seems more conscientious than remarkable for liveliness or insight. He seems almost careworn to establish the distinguished character (moral and artistic) of his hero, and appears to recount rather than account for the importance of Mestrovic. The result is that he engages the reader's sympathy without exciting his enthusiasm.

In this book's extensive illustrations the religious sculpture and the wood-carvings seem to carry the most weight. The "patriotic" sculptures, many of them powerful and striking, seem too often to fall into the category of rhetoric and melodrama. "Rodinesque" is the word that hangs over Mestrovic's work, and while he was not a pupil, and certainly displays an inspiration all his own, the influence of that giant of modern sculpture is everywhere evident. In Mestrovic you see the same treatment of broken surfaces, the sculptural impressionism of Rodin; also to a great extent the tensions and expressionism of Rodin. However, these qualities are in general simplified or qualified in the Yugoslav, and often submitted to a Byzantine, decorative impulse. This is most so in his wood-carvings ("The Archers of Domagoj" is a lyrical work, among the best) and in such non-monumental works as "His Mother at

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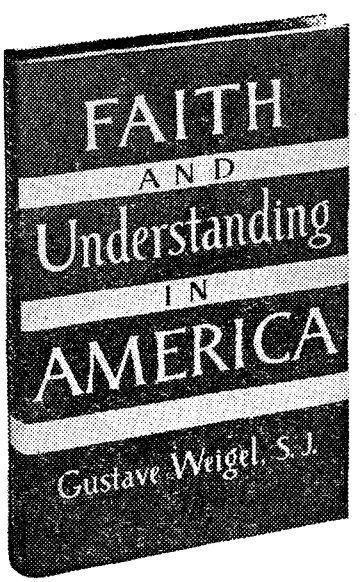

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Prayer" (Toronto Art Gallery), a simple eloquent marble in which the intensity of expression is achieved by the extreme ninety-degree angle at which the cowled head is held back—as if this seated peasant woman wished to look straight into heaven in her desire to communicate with God.

It is interesting to compare Rodin's *John the Baptist* (City Art Museum of St. Louis, Mo.) with Mestrovic's figure (Baptistry, Split, Dalmatia): the same handling of surface for the play of light is apparent, the same subtle distortion for expressive effect, but the authority of the gesture of the Rodin's *St. John,* its inner tension, is replaced in Mestrovic by design, essentially decorative in character. Even in his most violent creations *(Job* for example) Mestrovic's is a decorative violence rather than a dynamic one.

It is good to learn that one of Mestrovic's admirable crucifixions is in the Chapel of Notre Dame University, and that, while maintaining his praiseworthy position of self-imposed exile in his desire to express disapproval of the injustice dealt by the present Tito-Communist régime against such distinguished compatriots as Cardinal Stepinac, he is at the age of seventy-five, continuing his artistic career.

Scholars on Scrolls

THE EXCAVATIONS AT QUMRAN. By J. van der Ploeg, O.P. Translated by K. Smyth, S.J. Longmans, Green. $4.
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY. By Jean Daniélou, S.J. Translated by Salvator Attanasio. Helicon. $3

By JOSEPH A. FITZMYER

THE DUTCH Dominican, Father van der Ploeg, professor at the University of Nijmegen, was one of those chosen souls who happened to be in Jerusalem in 1947 when the scrolls of Qumran Cave I were first brought there. He was among the first scholars to gaze upon the now famous Isaiah Scroll

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A. Such an opportunity whetted his interest in the Scrolls and he has produced a number of scholarly writings on them. Turning his research to the interests of the general public, he published in 1957 *Vondsten in de Woestijn van Juda* in the pocket-book series *Prismaboeken*. A very readable English translation of it has been made by an Irish Jesuit, Father Kevin Smyth. It is to be regretted that the publishers decided to put it out in an expensive hard-back edition, when it could have done so much good as a paperback like its Dutch original to counteract the sensationalistic journalism of existing English paperbacks on the Scrolls.

Father van der Ploeg retells the story of the Qumran cave discoveries—with some rectification based on the part that he had in dealing with the Syrian Metropolitan who acquired half of the texts of Cave I. In sketching the historical setting of the Jewish group that wrote the Scrolls, he prefers to call them the "Qumran Brotherhood," while admitting that they belong to the "category of Essenes." A good summary is presented of the sect's ideas (dualism, immortality, predestination, the Teacher of Righteousness), its practices and its organization. Many of the questions often asked about the relationship of the Dead Sea Scrolls to Christianity (of Christ and the Teacher of Righteousness, of the influence on the Johannine and Pauline writings) are given an adequate and prudent answer in this small book. The extreme views of Dupont-Sommer, Wilson, Allegro and Davies are exposed for what they are worth. A scholar with definite religious affiliation, Father van der Ploeg has displayed in this book that such affiliation does not hinder one's objective scholarly approach. As an introduction of modest proportions to the problems of the Scrolls, the *Excavations at Qumran* is highly recommended to the interested, general reader.

More restricted in its scope is the little book of the French Jesuit, Jean Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and primitive Christianity*. Its purpose is to compare the Es-

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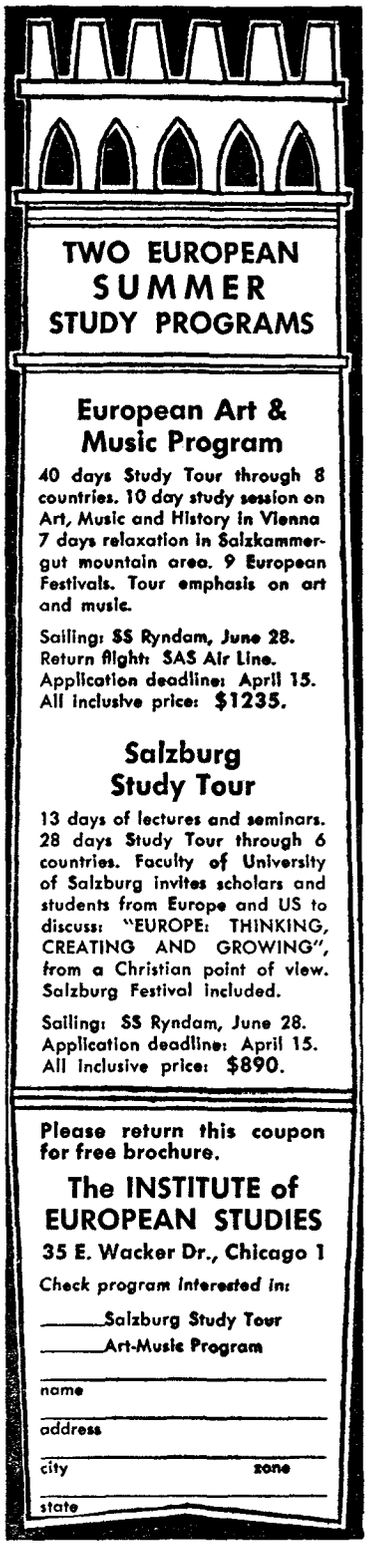
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senes of Qumran and the nascent Church. Father Daniélou is at his best in the second section, Christ and the Teacher of Righteousness. The book contains many suggestions that are very interesting, and some even brilliant. But they are presented along with many others that are doubtful and at best only remotely plausible. It is, for instance, quite questionable whether one should relate the Apostles of the early Church to "the Council of Twelve" in the organization of the Essene sect of Qumran, especially when the *Manual of Discipline* (8.1) speaks expressly of "twelve men and three priests"—hence a Council of Fifteen! Consequently, one wonders at the prudence of the author, who is professor of the History of Christian Origins at the Institut Catholique de Paris, in proposing to a wide reading public an array of suggestions that the general reader is not in a position to check and control.

The translator of this book had a problem on his hands, for the original was marred by an abundance of false references. Most of these he has rightly corrected. However, it is apparent that the translator is not well acquainted with the subject, for many technical expressions have been mistranslated and these will only mislead the ordinary reader. These are technical expressions both in the field of Qumran studies and of Christian institutions. For instance, the question is asked whether the origin of the Ember Days ("des Quatre-Temps") is not to be traced to the Essenes of Qumran; but in the English translation this turns up startingly as "the origin of the Four Seasons"! Or again, the *Genesis Apocryphon* of Cave I appears as the "Apocryphal Genesis"; the ancient Jewish "priestly calendar" used by the Qumran sect becomes the "ecclesiastical calendar," etc., etc.

Consequently, it is only with reserve that Father Daniélou's book, especially in this translation, can be recommended. The reader will find many good interpretations and suggestions in it, but he must be warned to check elsewhere before accepting all of them.

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Housman's Life

A. E. HOUSMAN: A DIVIDED LIFE. by George L. Watson. Beacon Press. $4.50.
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By VIVIAN MERCIER

A FRIEND OF MINE once called on a famous actor and was told by the maid, "He's upstairs writing his own pornography." It turned out that the player was engaged on his autobiography. After reading these two biographies, I feel that my friend's story has a moral: if you are at all famous, for heaven's sake write your own "pornography," replete with every sin you have ever committed, and arrange to have it published as soon as possible after your death. If you don't, someone else will write it for you, causing your survivors equal pain—unsweetened by royalties.

I was never a Housmaniac, but I shudder to think what that proud, reserved and sensitive man A. E. Housman would feel if he were to read these first two full-dress lives of him. Luckily, I have no qualms about what he would *say*: the venomous sarcasm distilled in his strictures on incompetent classical scholars would have a suitable target. The following could easily be adapted to his biographers: "When ---- has acquired a scrap of misinformation he cannot rest until he has imparted it." "She has a temperament which she mistakes for an intellect." "Nature, not content with denying to Mr. ---- the faculty of thought, has endowed him with the faculty of writing."

Actually, Mr. Watson can both write and think; without the assistance of the Housman family he has ferreted out the crucial experience in Housman's life—an undying attachment to an Oxford contemporary named Moses Jackson. My uneasiness about Mr. Watson's book, which shows good taste on the whole, springs from its occasional deviation into an arrogance similar to that of Lytton Strachey, who had at least more right to

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patronize his biographical subjects than has Mr. Watson.

Jackson and Housman roomed together in their last year at Oxford; the poet probably realized then for the first time that his feelings toward his extrovert friend were abnormal. At any rate, he temporarily wrecked a career which then promised to be good but not outstanding, by hopelessly failing his B.A. exams. Obscure years in the British Patent Office followed, toward the end of which Housman began to contribute highly original papers to classical journals. Eleven years after his Oxford failure he achieved the Chair of Latin at University College, London, in a single leap, being now an M.A. but never having held a college post. Later he held a similar post (equivalent to that of a full professor and department head here) at Cambridge University.

Jackson was Housman's colleague at the Patent Office, and the two friends roomed together for about four years in London, then separated. Not until the separation did Housman devote himself wholeheartedly to scholarship. It was in the five years after Jackson's marriage and departure for India that most of the poems in *A Shropshire Lad* (published 1896) were written. Much later, Jackson's last illness seems to have prompted the completion and publication of *Last Poems* (1922).

Such are the facts and Mr. Watson's interpretation of them, Mrs. Hawkins, aided by the late Laurence and Clemence Housman, unmarried brother and sister of the unmarried poet, is able to confirm all Mr. Watson's surmises and go beyond them. Laurence Housman told her that a diary of his brother's, now in the British Museum, "reveals the most intimate relations" between Housman and Jackson. Apparently Jackson insisted on Housman's moving to separate lodgings when he realized the full extent of the latter's emotional involvement with him. (The diary is to be made available on March 26, 1959, the centenary of the poet's birth.) The rest of Housman's life seems to have been on the one hand a long self-punish-

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ment, on the other hand a deliberate avoidance of emotional ties which might lead to disgrace or heartbreak. A stern moralist as well as an avowed atheist, Housman faced an acute dilemma. Lacking the assurance of divine forgiveness, he must have felt that his past sins were irredeemable — hence the yearning for oblivion so frequently expressed in his poetry.

I cannot understand what induced Laurence Housman, author of *Victoria Regina* and many other works, to entrust his brother's secret to Mrs. Hawkins, who seems deficient in tact, intelligence, general culture and literary talent but not in a peculiarly Southern gentility—against which, however, she struggles manfully. I find her "broadmindedness" really appalling when expressed in such terms as these (relative to a possible but unlikely relationship between Housman and a one-eyed gondolier): "The world of romance, the Grand Canal under the spell of moonlight, the slow steering of the gondola, and then no steering . . . how far will one's fancy carry him?" A Victorian or Southern reticence would be infinitely preferable to an emancipation which expresses itself in the language of the pulp novel. A biographer can afford to lack intellect but not sensibility.

Wisely neither of his biographers attempt to psychoanalyze Housman, though they point to obvious clues: his attachment to his mother, who died when he was twelve, and his failure to "identify" with his weak, incompetent, mildly alcoholic father. If someone with psychoanalytic training does undertake a Housman biography, he will be fascinated by the aggressions released in the "light verse" which Laurence Housman printed in *My Brother, A. E. Housman,* an indispensable short study of the poet.

Laurence Housman, who died the other day, wrote to Mrs. Hawkins concerning the soon-to-be-revealed diary: "It will shock some people, and make them very angry; but I believe that A.E.H. wished it to be known after his death that he was what he was—a man who gave more devoted love than he

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I find that it is not possible for me to give adequate praise to *Worship* in the space alloted. It is sound and scholarly—but at the same time lively and direct. Probably most of its readers are priests, but it is written and edited for all Catholics.

The subject matter and purpose of the magazine do not vary from issue to issue: *Worship* is published to help people understand the Mass and the sacraments. Yet there is tremendous variety in its pages; perhaps the first and possibly the most valuable educational experience one gets from it is the realization of the ties between liturgy and life.

Worship treats of the social order, religious sociology, music, art, and architecture, of the psychology of modern man, the meaning of sacrifice, liturgical reforms, and of the participation of the laity in the prayer-life of the Church.

I said it was for "all Catholics," but there must be a reservation. Though *Worship* is "popular" in the sense of being non-technical, it asks serious work and some background of its readers. Given the work, the background could be derived (over a number of issues) from the magazine itself.

— Robert Hoyt in *The Kansas City—St. Joseph Register*

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ever received: and as a result was a *lonely* man to the end of his days." That compassionate sentence is worth all the other words in both these books. In the gossip that has surrounded Housman's name for many years now and is bound to be intensified when someone publishes the diary, I hope the poet's long atonement will not be forgotten.

A Teacher

SPINSTER. By Sylvia Ashton-Warner. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.

By MAX COSMAN

THE WRITER of a first novel usually has faults, but they are frequently compensated for by a freshness and wonder in the work. Looked at from this view, Mrs. Ashton-Warner is rather favored. She shows no serious weakness, unless it be a somewhat inconclusive end, and she still has the mingled surprise and curiosity, the exultation of the beginner.

Beginner! The term seems to make a charge of amateurism, of a lack of lived knowledge. But here too Mrs. Ashton-Warner is favored. *Spinster* is as experience-steeped as it is adeptly told. Its presentation of Anna (call me "Anna Mistake") Vorontosov, infant mistress of fifty to seventy "Little Ones" in an out-of-town school in New Zealand, is a triumph. Indeed, seldom has a member of the pedagogic spinsterhood had her nature, confused alarms, and ambivalent victories so sensitively set forth.

We soon realize what Anna's tragedy really is: she is a creative creature in an uncreative set-up. Her bane is to function like adjusted colleagues. But try as she will, she cannot. Keeping a roll book up-to-date, for example, is too much of a chore for her. Curricular niceties, all too often nonsensicalities, are also a problem. Worse still, she has a deplorable habit. Apparently she depends on half a tumbler of brandy in the morning to rid her of private longings and of professional guilt—a guilt that arises just as

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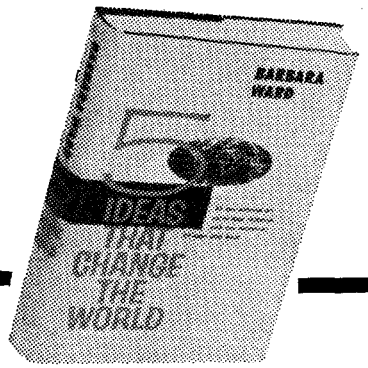

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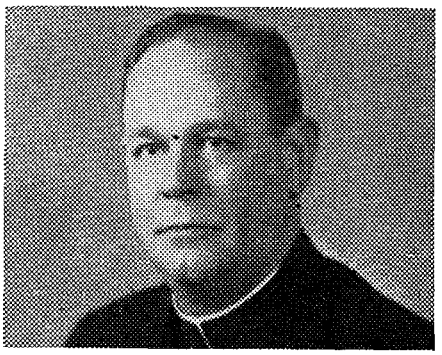
much from feeling herself an outsider as from being conscious of her peccadillos.

Her glory, nevertheless, is that even as she rebels against stultifying processes she catches hold of what could revise them nearer to the heart's desire. Her findings, one might almost call them revelations, come together under two heads: first, a child's preliminary vocabulary is psychiatric in origin—she calls it "the Key Vocabulary"; second, youngsters for whom communication has been established can be guided not to tear down but to build up. In the Scheme, which is a compendium of her notes on the matter, she has this comment: "I see the mind of a five-year-old as a volcano with two vents, destructiveness and creativeness. And I see that to the extent that we widen the creative channel we atrophy the destructive one."

They are an intriguing lot, these children referred to, from Mohi the commentator (who either wants to know, "How old do you weigh?" or casually remarks, "You got ugly hands,") to Seven the aggressor (who once he gets hold of an axe is a menace to Matawhero, Bleeding Heart, One-Pint or any of the others who get in his way). Interesting too are the adults Anna meets and parts with reluctantly: Mr. Reardon, the dedicated Head of the school; W. W. J. Abercrombie, Senior Inspector, whose appreciation of a creative teacher's contributions is not sufficient to let him "grade" her higher; and, most poignant of all, Paul Vercoe, handsome doomed fellow teacher, whose ideal of "faith in another creature" is never matched by the complementary one of faith in himself.

What ultimately remains with the critical reader, however, is not so much these personalities tented to the quick, or the details of an outpost schooling, as a skill which avoids tutorial maudlinity on the one hand and, bearing in mind the author's own stint as mistress of Maori classes, subconscious exculpation on the other. Narrating in the first person, stippling her account with imagistic vignettes and threnetical scenes (they remind Sir

The man who reads dictionaries



FATHER HAROLD C. GARDINER, S.J., literary editor of *America* and author of *Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship*, says:

"WRITERS are not always good spellers, my friends and coworkers (or should it be co-workers?) tell me, so I look up the word in an effort to cooperate — or should it be co-operate (or perhaps coöperate?). Dictionaries are fascinating depositaries of the linguistic lore of a people, and a tool that poor-spelling editors like me (like myself?) should make more use of. Fowler would probably say, 'of which I should make more use.' But then, who is Fowler when we can prowl in WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY, *College Edition*. The 'American' language? Yes, there is such a thing, and this dictionary is a wonderful source for good use of it."

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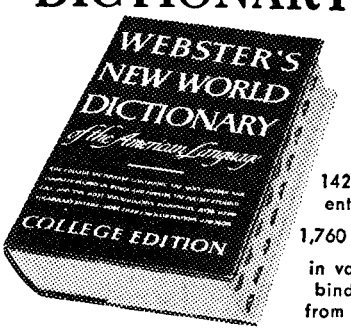

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Herbert Read of Emily Dickinson; one is also reminded of Edna St. Vincent Millay), Mrs. Ashton-Warner has in *Spinster* fashioned a work that engages the sympathies unreservedly.

Grave of a Novel

THE WIND. By Claude Simon. Brazil-ler. $3.50.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

REPEATEDLY Claude Simon remarks on how futile it is to try to reconstruct the moment as the moment was, a caveat which is most instructive for anyone pre-suming to synopsize the "events" (inverted commas are the author's) of this novel as they happen, or almost happen, or don't happen. The following partial summary is designed, within space limitations, to do special justice to those idio-syncratic subtleties in the author's writing which have caused a cluster of hitherto rather sturdy Parisian bookmen to confess that they have been stunned by the originality.

From the moment he (Montés) arrives in the southern French town, a Mediterranean cesspool where he wasn't even born, to claim the land his father (who was a lecher caught by his mother (Montés') in an interesting position with the maid only a week after she had been carrying (Montés), and who can say that such a man doesn't deserve to be walked out on right in the act and to die thirty-five years later? which is how old he (Montés) is, only looking fifty and as if just escaped from Buchenwald when he arrives in all his excruciating innocence and grotesque impotence) left him, he becomes the town scarecrow, and everyone immediately begins asking why he doesn't go back where he came from.

But that isn't why he's an idiot, nor is it because the property is worthless (in the end they swindle him but the end is later (before that he meets Rose, a young gipsy who is being two-timed by her

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The full purport of these events comes to light after many pages more of incomplete exchanges, calculated to expose the meaninglessness of finished sentences, and whose pioneer daring once you have grown accustomed to it will prove ultimately unrewarding.

M. Simon has spared no redundancy to persuade his readers of the absolute, irretrievable, infallible, contagious nullity of existence; and he has gone about it with decision. Now walking cadavers are nothing very new in fiction, but it has been tacitly assumed they should be interestingly dead and not just slowly nudged into their supererogatory graves. Claude Simon will have none of the embalmer's *trompe l'oeil,* for he belongs to the mortuary class of French novelists sprung from the cult of the Absurd.

Quite aside from its own peculiar ineptness, *The Wind* illustrates an effective way for the novel to dig its own grave, or at least ebb away to a necrophiliac parody of itself. Schooled in elegant nausea, Simon is capable of defining life as both enigmatic and meaningless: the notional absurd, paradoxically, seems to make arrogance mandatory. M. Simon, in the teeth of his own homily about the prejudices of logical analysis, betrays again and again how glib and how ripe for literary effect his commitment to futility is. He has scaled down all his figures to a cipherhood in which they bear no likeness to real people —living or dead.

REVIEWERS

Robert Gutwillig is a New York writer whose second novel will soon be published.

Betty Kaufman writes regularly for this magazine on art and artists.

Joseph Fitzmyer, who teaches Scripture at Woodstock College, has concerned himself for many years with scholarly studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Vivian Mercier teaches at City College of New York and is a specialist in modern French literature.

Max Cosman is a frequent contributor to critical and scholarly journals.

William Dunlea is a free-lance critic who makes his home in New York.

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